



January 31, 2017

NAWCAD Lakehurst Mentor of the Year helps develop next generation of engineers



Ms. Kathleen P. Donnelly, SES, director of the NAVAIR Support Equipment and Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment Department, recognized John Melin, the NAWCAD Lakehurst Mentor of the Year, during the NAVAIR Mentor of the Year Award Recognition Event Jan. 24. (U.S. Navy Photo)

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. – The Naval Air Systems Command recognized mentors from across the command for their dedication to helping shape and develop the workforce during the National Mentoring Month Celebration and Mentor of the Year Award Recognition Event Jan. 24.

Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division Lakehurst honored its Mentor of the Year, John Melin, a mechanical engineer who has worked at Lakehurst for more than 30 years and has been mentoring in some capacity since 2000. Melin was among 19 Lakehurst employees nominated for Mentor of the Year, the most from any NAVAIR location.

“Your ability to listen and encourage others to think deeper, explore desired interests and challenge themselves to be bold in their pursuits is an admirable characteristic of a good mentor,” Ms. Kathleen P. Donnelly, SES, director of the NAVAIR Support Equipment and Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment Department, read from Melin’s Letter of Appreciation during the ceremony. “Through leading by example, you actively provide continuous opportunities for learning and development and have made the mentoring



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relationship a rewarding and successful experience for many employees at NAWCAD Lakehurst.”

Melin began mentoring through the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and joined the NAVAIR Mentoring Program to guide entry-level engineers who are new to the government and help them succeed, he said.

“Every time you do mentoring it forces you to rethink things and a lot of times you get more out of it than you put into it,” said Melin. “I like to see the people succeed. The bonus is refreshing your ideas and being able to apply them to yourself. I’ve even had mentees provide me with my own advice so in a sense, the mentoring goes both ways.”

Melin and his mentees discuss all aspects of their careers to include training, what engineering rotations to take, professional development opportunities, and how they fit into the Navy team.

“As a new hire at Lakehurst almost four years ago, John made a point to talk to me on my first day in the department and give me guidance that continues to help me to this day,” said Ryan Lewis, NAWCAD Lakehurst engineer. “He has introduced me to many colleagues over the last few years, which has helped me establish positive working relationships, and he was instrumental in helping me figure out my long term career goals during our many mentoring lunch meetings.”

Melin also likes to provide help with anything the mentee needs, whether it’s housing, work-life balance, or other non-work related issues.

“John has not only guided me in the right direction but became personally involved in what was important to me,” said Maxim Lazoutchenkov, NAWCAD Lakehurst engineer. “He has gone above and beyond to show me the stepping stones needed to shape a successful career with the Navy.”

“He kind of took me under his wing,” said Anthony Fontana, Stevens Institute of Technology Co-Op student who works at NAWCAD Lakehurst in the summer. “I hadn’t done something on the government side. I went to him and he kind of guided me pretty much in every way possible, any kind of questions I had, whether it be about work, or about life even, he was there.”

Melin encourages others to participate in NAVAIR’s mentoring program if their schedule allows, and said there is support across the command to help those new to the program.

“I think for someone who is thinking ‘I’ll give it a try,’ there’s a lot of support out there,” said Melin. “Then you just tailor it to what you can handle. That’s what I do. Tailor it to the needs of the individual and what you’re best able to do. It’s definitely a worthwhile experience.”

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NAWCAD Lakehurst Mentor of the Year Award nominees were recognized during the NAVAIR National Mentoring Month Celebration and Mentor of the Year Award Recognition Event Jan. 24. (U.S. Navy Photo)